

Asia Education Foundation

Submission to the Australian Government

White Paper on Australia in the Asian Century

1 Introduction

A five-year-old starting school in Australia today will enter the workforce just at the time India and China become the leading global economies alongside the United States. To maximise the opportunities of the Asian Century, and minimize the challenges, it makes sense that our five-year-olds will need to acquire, by the time they leave school, familiarity with the cultural diversity and social and economic dynamism of contemporary Asia and be equipped with the knowledge and intercultural skills to engage widely in our region, and in an increasingly mobile and diverse Australia.

Being 'Asia literate' means possessing knowledge, skills and understandings of the histories, geographies, arts, cultures and languages of the diverse Asian region.

The most effective channel to equip *all* young Australians with Asia literacy is through their school education.

An Asia literate schooling will provide our young people with a competitive edge in today's world and contribute to our national advantage. Young Australians who possess a regional and global mindset and skill-set will be able to build a creative, prosperous and socially cohesive Australia and develop harmonious regional and global communities that can work together to resolve the issues that affect us all.

This submission is focused on government policy settings and strategies required to ensure that Australian primary and secondary schooling adequately equips young Australians - and Australia - for the Asian Century.

It argues that there has never been a better time for this to be successful:

- strong education policy foundations are now in place that have elevated Asia literacy from an optional and intermittent focus on Asia to a core objective for all young Australians in all schools through the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*,¹ the new Australian Curriculum and new national standards for teachers and school leaders;
- broad education stakeholder support has been built through the Education and Business Alliances for Asia Literacy, and

¹ *The Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*, Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, December 2008.

- many proven programs and strategies are in place in education systems and schools.

However, we need to do much better than we currently are. Only small-scale progress towards Asia literacy becoming a universally attainable school education outcome has been achieved despite investment exceeding \$500 million over twenty years. At the senior levels of schooling participation in Asian languages has remained static for over a decade at around six percent of Year 12 students² and only a very small proportion of Year 12 students study any content at all about Asia in History, English, Geography, Economics, Politics and The Arts.³

The current intermittent and gradual trajectory of improvement and the patchwork of programs of the past two decades can no longer suffice. Taking into account the global rise of Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia, this should be a cause of significant concern for all Australians. If we consider those five-year-olds, Australia has one more generation of school children left to get this right.

Why has progress been so slow?

There is a view that past efforts to progress Asia literacy have all failed. While there have been critical fault lines in major strategies, this assessment needs some qualification. Many successful programs have been limited in impact by being small-scale and marginal rather than a core focus of education systems, sectors and schools.

Promising programs have lacked continuity and sustainability because of stop/start funding. Momentum built has been lost when governments or policies change. Strategies have been inhibited by lack of serious attention to structural impediments such as education workforce capacity and senior years assessment procedures, and a lack of investment in an evidence base to inform effective pedagogies, building student demand and flexible delivery of languages.

There has been a predominant focus on issues of supply and too little has been done to build demand for Asia literacy among students, parents and the community who are more familiar with the traditional Eurocentric focus of Australian school curriculum.

Strategies have largely focused on Asian languages and too little has been invested in the study of Asia across the curriculum. There is a pressing need to increase investment in the study of Asia in its own right as this presents the most achievable avenue for ensuring a critical mass of Asia literate students.

What action is required now?

A landmark report released in February 2012, examined the rapid high level of school education success in East Asian countries. It concludes that the factor that has had most influence on building success in East Asian education systems, *'comes from a detailed*

² *Four Languages, Four Stories: The Current State of Chinese, Japanese, Indonesian and Korean Languages in Australian Schools*, AEF, May 2010

³ *Studies of Asia in Year 12*, Wilkinson and Milgate, 2009, Australian Council of Educational Research & AEF

*strategy, effective implementation, and a cohesive set of programs that have an unrelenting focus on improving learning. These systems understand that whole-system implementation is the new education strategy.*⁴

A national ‘unrelenting focus on whole-system commitment to a cohesive set of programs’ is what has been missing from past efforts to progress Asia literacy. We now need to go beyond policy settings and invest in policy implementation.

A bi-partisan long-term, national action plan for Asia literacy is required. We recommend that such a plan include three strategic interventions:

1. *Ensure national coordination and collaboration of strategies* taking into account that jurisdictions and schools have prime responsibility for planning and delivery of the Australian Curriculum. National change strategies would include re-generated forums for Asia-Australia education jurisdiction dialogue; monitoring student participation and outcomes; supporting innovative solutions to intractable problems; building a contemporary evidence base; addressing structural impediments; utilising new technologies and developing a national digital resource bank of curriculum resources and school programs.
2. *Build up the Asia capability of Australia’s education workforce* to ensure the goals of the Australian Curriculum and National Standards can be met including equip every school principal to lead an Asia literate school; provide all teachers with access to targeted professional learning programs to build Asia knowledge; provide curriculum resources and an evidence base to support classroom implementation of the Australian Curriculum and ensure all graduate teachers enter the workforce with Asia knowledge and skills relevant to their teaching qualification.
3. *Increase the value students, parents and the community place on Asia knowledge and Asian languages* including engage all Australian schools with schools in Asia to strengthen people-to-people links; support school, business and community partnerships; implement a public education strategy and provide incentives to students to continue Asian languages study.

Importantly, this plan would differentiate between strategies to achieve Asia knowledge through cross curriculum studies of Asia for every student, and strategies to expand Asian languages for a smaller cohort of students. These two elements of Asia literacy have commonly been conflated in past efforts, yet each experience a discrete set of challenges and opportunities.

Australia’s Asia Literacy Action Plan would require significant investment. In today’s monetary terms, strategies like NALSAS⁵ invested around \$100 million per year and resulted

⁴ *Catching up: Lessons from high-performing systems in East Asia*, Jensen, B, 2012 Grattan Institute

⁵ National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools, 1995-2002

in doubling the number of students undertaking Asian languages and 50 percent of schools including some study of Asia.⁶

Leveraging the new opportunity provided by the Australian Curriculum, Australia's Asia literacy strategy would require a minimum of 10 years to ensure the sustainability that NALSAS lacked. A similar level of investment will cost over \$1 billion dollars.

Consider this. That's an investment of around \$33 per student per year over 10 years. That would seem a small price to pay to equip every young Australian - and Australia - for the opportunities of the Asian Century.

Asia Education Foundation

The Asia Education Foundation⁷ (AEF) has played a key role for twenty years in promoting and supporting Asia literacy in Australian schooling, advising on policy and implementation and facilitating educators' engagement in program innovations with the support of our parent bodies, Asialink at The University of Melbourne⁸ and Education Services Australia⁹.

The AEF has made a unique contribution in facilitating the establishment of strong Australia – Asia education partnerships at system and school levels, in context with Asialink's extensive business, cultural and academic networks.

This submission draws on AEF's extensive research and program evaluations, the wide international networks that have been consolidated over two decades in the Asian region and the system and school leadership experience of the AEF Advisory Board¹⁰.

The submission provides an overview of current policy settings and outcomes for achieving knowledge, skills and understandings about Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia in the school sector, analyses the major shortcomings, identifies the opportunities and charts the pathway to achieving the entitlement of every young Australian in every school to be 'Asia literate'.

2 Current Policy Environment

For the first time a national policy framework for Asia literacy and a set of institutional commitments are in place. These not only provide greater clarity for the aims of Asia literacy but will serve as the foundation for a longer term Asia literacy strategy more attuned to the urgency of this agenda. Current key school education policies and programs for Asia literacy are as follows.

⁶ Erebus Consulting, 2002, Review of NALSAS, Commonwealth of Australia

⁷ The AEF is a joint activity of Asialink at The University of Melbourne and Education Services Australia. It has received core funding from the Federal Department of Education since 1992 to promote and support Asia literacy in Australian schooling. www.asiaeducation.edu.au

⁸ www.asialink.edu.au

⁹ www.esa.edu.au

¹⁰ See Attachment 1: Board members.

- The 2008 **Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians** states ‘the need for Australians to become ‘Asia literate’ so as to engage and build strong relationships with Asia’. Ministers of Education agreed that the capability to understand and engage with the diverse countries of Asia is a vital twenty-first century skill-set and central to Australia being part of our increasingly interconnected region. To become ‘active and involved local and global citizens’, all young people need the capability to relate to and communicate across the cultures and countries of Asia.
- The **Australian Curriculum**, developed by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), has included ‘Asia and Australia’s engagement with Asia’ as one of three cross-curriculum priorities and ‘Intercultural Understanding’ as one of seven general student capabilities.¹¹
 - The place of ‘Asia and Australia’s engagement with Asia’ as one of three cross-curriculum priorities in the Australian Curriculum allows every young Australian to gain knowledge and develop better understandings of the countries and cultures of the Asian region and their engagement with Australia. This involves embedding studies of Asia in all learning areas from Foundation Year to Year 12, rather than establish a discrete subject called ‘Asian Studies’. Asia-related content in the curriculum is currently not a strong feature of any single learning area, but is being progressively realised as the curriculum is developed. The major themes are 1) Asia and its diversity; 2) the achievements and contributions of the people of Asia; and 3) Asia-Australia engagement.
 - ‘*Intercultural Understanding*’ is one of seven general capabilities to be achieved by all students by the time they leave school. Students are ‘to develop intercultural understanding as they learn to value their own cultures, languages and beliefs, and those of others. They come to understand how personal, group and national identities are shaped, and the variable and changing nature of culture. The capability involves students in learning about and engaging with diverse cultures in ways that recognise commonalities and differences, create connections with others and cultivate mutual respect’¹². This is not specific to Asia and is to be embedded in the subjects and disciplines that comprise the curriculum throughout schooling.
 - ACARA has issued *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages*¹³ that explains the place of languages as one of the key learning areas in the Australian Curriculum and hence a core component of the educational experience of all students. The paper lists five Asian languages in a group of eleven languages. Chinese is one of the first two languages (along with Italian) currently being developed in detail for Foundation Year to Year 10.

¹¹ <http://www.acara.edu.au/curriculum.html>

¹² ACARA www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/GeneralCapabilities/Intercultural-understanding/Introduction/Introduction

¹³ ACARA, November 2011

- The **Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership** (AITSL) is working with universities and professional bodies to establish Australia's first national teacher and school leader standards. The AEF is working with AITSL to identify how the standards can recognise the need for teachers and leaders in Australian schools to be Asia literate. This is required if school leaders are to have the capacity to guide their schools to achieve Asia literacy; to ensure that teachers have the capabilities required to include the Asia priority in the Australian Curriculum and to inform the focus of initial teacher education.
- The AEF ***National Statement on Asia Literacy in Australian Schools 2011-2012***,¹⁴ noted by education senior officials in September 2011, provides an implementation framework to guide achievement of Asia literacy outcomes in line with the Asia priority of the Australian Curriculum. It commits to sustained national action in implementing the Australian Curriculum; developing Asia literate school leaders and teachers; developing classroom resources aligned with curriculum frameworks; innovative solutions for the provision of Asian languages; and expanding demand for Asian studies and languages in the community. However, there are no national (or state) plans in place to action this Statement and the responsibility currently largely resides with individual state and territory education jurisdictions and with individual schools.
- The Australian Government committed \$62.4m to the ***National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program (NALSSP) 2008-2012***. This distribution has been 70 percent of funds to state and territory government and non-government jurisdictions; 15 percent allocated to national collaborative partnerships including with universities and business; 10 percent to the *Becoming Asia Literate Grants to Schools* managed by the AEF; and 5 percent to national projects. The NALSSP is to focus on flexible delivery and pathways, teacher supply and stimulating student demand for the four target languages, Mandarin Chinese, Indonesian, Japanese and Korean. While current national goals aim for 100 percent of young Australians to be Asia literate, the aspirational target set for NALSSP by the Council of Australian Governments is that by 2020 at least 12 percent of Year 12 students will exit schooling with a fluency in one of the target Asian languages. This would double the current number of students doing so. There was no equivalent NALSSP target set for student participation or outcomes in the study of Asia. The NALSSP effectively ends in December 2012.

Many state/territory jurisdictions and schools also have a range of policy commitments and direction statements for Asia literacy or components of that such as for Asian languages.

¹⁴ *National Statement on Asia Literacy in Australian Schools, 2011-2012*, AEF

3 Broad stakeholder support for Asia literacy

Global expert on education system reform, Professor Michael Fullan, has found that, *'the (reform) strategy must mobilise and engage large numbers of people who are individually and collectively committed...It works because it is focused, relentless, operates as a partnership between and across layers and above all else uses the collective energy of the whole group. There is no way of achieving whole system reform if the vast majority of people are not working on it together.'*¹⁵

Since 2008 significant progress has been achieved in engaging commitment to Asia literacy by a broad range of key education stakeholders. In 2009 the AEF formed the *Education Alliance for Asia Literacy* comprising thirty peak teacher, principal and parent organisations; in 2010 the *Business Alliance for Asia Literacy* was established comprising all peak business bodies and sixty-six of Australia's top companies. In 2011 both alliances joined in a call on Ministers of Education for a *National Action Plan for Asia Literacy*.¹⁶

Twenty years ago only a few groups of educators with a niche interest in Asia would have supported the need for such a plan. Even a decade ago most school educators were of the view that Asia literacy was an optional extra in Australian school education and low on the priority list. The reality of the Asian Century and the context of current education policy has changed that. Education stakeholders now understand that young people are entitled to be equipped with the knowledge and skills to maximise their opportunities in the Asian Century.

Good policy needs to be invested in if it is to be successfully implemented in schools. Educating young Australians to become Asia literate requires a substantial response by all Australian governments and education authorities working in collaboration with all school sectors, education organisations, parents and the broader community, including business and industry.

4 International comparisons

Australia is not alone in its commitment to raising the levels of international mindedness with a focus on Asia among its young people. Education systems across the globe are increasingly seen as the key to internationally relevant capabilities. The United Kingdom, European countries and the United States have established education policies, programs and partnerships designed to embed Asia literacy learning in schools.

China, Korea and other countries in Asia are also seeking to build global partnerships to build a global mindset in their education systems and are initiating language and cultural programs in pursuit of greater international understanding of their cultures. China, for example, will enable many thousands of teachers and principals to gain international experience through training in other countries over the next five years.

¹⁵ All Systems Go: The Change Imperative for Whole System Reform, 2010, Fullan, M,

¹⁶ http://www.asiaeducation.edu.au/default.asp?id=site_search&query=National+Action+Plan

Attachment Two contains a snapshot of international examples.

Box 1 is an illustration of a US State policy for schools' international engagement.¹⁷

Global literacy for schools in Wisconsin: a state policy

It is vital that Wisconsin schools give students access to their peers abroad. The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction:

- recommends that every school has a Sister School abroad and provides a template to match Wisconsin sister schools with schools in partner countries
- promotes programs to bring teachers from abroad so that students can learn from educators of other countries and cultures
- co-sponsors the Japan-Wisconsin Education Connection to bring K-12 teachers from Japan to Wisconsin for 3 months
- co-sponsors Korea-Wisconsin Teachers in Schools to bring teachers from Korea to middle and high schools for one week
- encourages schools to use technologies to connect to classrooms abroad by such outstanding programs as i*EARN, Global Nomads, United Nations Cyber.

5 Studies of Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia

Recent reports on doing business in Asia make the point that foundational and deep knowledge and understandings of the diverse countries of Asia are increasingly essential to be able to do business in and with Asia.¹⁸

The study of Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia is the most effective gateway to Asia literacy for every young Australian. When the study of Asia is embedded in all subject areas, particularly History, English, Geography and the Arts, foundational Asia literacy becomes attainable for 100 percent of school students.

The study of Asian languages is also an important asset for knowledge and skills related to specific Asian countries and for intercultural understanding. Being fluent in an Asian language can provide deep understanding and a sophisticated skill-set and this submission does not advocate decreasing our efforts to build up the very small number of young Australians currently studying an Asian language (18 percent of all school students, Foundation Year to Year 11 and 5.8 percent in Year 12¹⁹).

What this submission does advocate is the need to increase investment in the studies of Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia in its own right, as this presents the most achievable avenue for ensuring a critical mass of Asia literate students.

¹⁷ Source: Internationalising Education Phase One, Centre for Strategic Education, for Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Victoria, 2008.

¹⁸ *Engaging Asia: what business needs*, 2011, Asialink and Ai Group

¹⁹ *Four Languages, Four Stories: the current state of Chinese, Japanese, Indonesian and Korean language education in Australian schools*, 2010, AEF

The distinction between the two key elements of Asia literacy: cross curricula studies of Asia and Asian languages, is an important one for the White Paper to consider. The vital contribution of studies of Asia to achieving a critical mass of Asia literate Australians has not been adequately reflected in investment in Asia literacy strategies of the past two decades.

National programs, including the National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools (NALSAS 1995-2002) and the National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program (NALSSP 2009-2012) have predominantly focussed on progressing Asian languages.

By contrast, investment in cross curriculum studies of Asia has been modest, with between 15 and 20 percent of these program's funds allocated to it. This has resulted in mostly small scale and short-term initiatives. There has been minimal investment in monitoring student uptake and progression in knowledge of Asia and no targets for the studies of Asia have been set to drive better student outcomes.

It is also important to note that achieving universal Asia literacy through studies of Asia faces a different set of challenges to those facing the expansion of Asian languages in schools and yet the two are commonly conflated in strategic planning.

The challenges to progress studies of Asia are not as complex or seemingly intractable as those facing Asian languages. For example, there is not an issue of teacher supply for studies of Asia. We already have primary school teachers and secondary teachers of history, geography, English and the Arts in our classrooms. Rather, the challenge is to build existing classroom teachers' Asia knowledge base through initial teacher education and ongoing professional learning, and to support teachers with Asia focused classroom resources and programs and supportive school leadership and environments.

The set of complex issues that have made the task of building up Asian languages in schools so difficult - including effective pedagogies, student language pathways between primary and secondary schools, student choice, the limited size of student cohorts in some languages and building student (and parent) interest in continuation of language studies – simply do not apply to accelerating studies of Asia.

The solutions to the challenge of accelerating the uptake of studies of Asia are well known and include to:

- ensure the Australian Curriculum adequately includes an explicit Asia focus
- monitor student participation and achievement in studies of Asia
- engage and equip school leaders to ensure that Asia literacy can be achieved in their schools
- engage teachers and build their Asia knowledge and capacity
- develop high quality curriculum resources and programs to support teachers to embed studies of Asia in their classroom curriculum.

The Australian Curriculum's inclusion of Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia as a cross-curriculum priority, and intercultural understanding as a general capability, presents

the most significant opportunity for advancing the objectives of the studies of Asia element of Asia literacy seen to date.

And this opportunity can be realised if the next step includes a practical and ambitious plan to achieve these objectives. Investment in curriculum resources, school programs and building teacher and school leader capability is now required to move Asia knowledge from being a high-level curriculum policy to finding a significant place in our classrooms.

Recent programs

Programs over the past two decades for supporting the growth of the study of Asia and intercultural understanding, frequently initiated by AEF, have had some success, albeit small-scale. AEF programs over the past three years engaged 14 percent of Australian schools. In contrast, funding under NALSAS in the mid 1990's enabled AEF to engage 33 percent of schools in the AEF's *National Access Asia Schools Network*. This impressive momentum was lost with the premature cessation of NALSAS in 2002 and a subsequent six-year gap in investment until the NALSSP in 2009.

Successful initiatives have included:

- *Curriculum resource production.* For example, the AEF web portal²⁰ provides free access to over 1000 curriculum resources including 85 English, history and mathematics resources already aligned with the Australian Curriculum.
- *School leader engagement.* For example, the Leading 21st Century Schools: Engage with Asia program has equipped 5 percent of Australian school principals to lead whole school curriculum change to achieve Asia literacy.
- *Professional learning.* For example, AEF study programs in Asia for teachers have seen 3000 Australian school educators catalysed by first hand experience of contemporary Asia.
- *Asia literacy advocacy for students and parents.* For example, Asia Literacy Business Ambassadors is a successful initiative that takes business people into secondary schools to show Asia skills in action with 287 ambassadors and schools and 13,000 students involved since 2010; and getting parents on board is the aim of a NALSSP project between peak parent bodies and AEF to equip a cohort of 150 parent advocates from 75 schools nationwide to promote the need for Asia literacy to their school communities.
- *Innovations in Asian languages and cultures programs.* For example, the innovative Australia-Asia School BRIDGE program with Indonesia, South Korea and China links teachers and students in these countries with 200 Australian schools for a mix of language and cultural studies through people-to-people exchanges and on-line collaborations.

²⁰ www.asiaeducation.edu.au

- *Regional planning and co-ordination for Asia literacy* has been initiated as a strategy in some education regions around Australia: Eastern Metropolitan Region in Victoria and the Sydney and Western Regions in NSW are examples. The approach to partnering with groups of schools in Asia is multi-level across principals, teachers and students, using visits, exchanges and social media to plan and share professional and curriculum activities.
- *Grants to schools.* For example, the NALSSP included \$8.14m for competitive grants to schools for 'Becoming Asia Literate' in relation to the four priority countries (China, Japan, Korea and Indonesia), with 13 percent of these grants allocated to cross curricula studies of Asia initiatives.

There is already a groundswell of innovation in embedding studies of Asia in schools and many positive initiatives to draw on for future programs.

However, there have been constraints. NALSSP has only allocated around 15 percent of funds to cross curricula studies of Asia and has not set targets for furthering the impact of the study of Asia. NALSSP limited coverage to the four priority countries and this has meant that studies concerning other Asian countries including India, Vietnam, Malaysia, Thailand and others have not been supported. This was a similar pattern of expenditure for the previous NALSAS program (1995-2002).

Insights from evaluations

While many small-scale initiatives are successful and show significant potential, assessments of success at the national level are more tentative. When the effectiveness of initiatives to address Asia literacy are measured by restrictive criteria, such as the number of students studying one of four languages at senior secondary level, many valuable student experiences and ways of ensuring that all students have opportunities to develop Asia literacy are marginalised.

There are four national studies on the extent of provision of studies of Asia and the implications for expansion and improved outcomes. These conclude that, while there are instances of good practice, progress on the whole has been slow: the senior curriculum is an inhibitor; contemporary curriculum resources are not well known; and, importantly, teacher interest and capability is uneven if not deficient.

- A 2002 study²¹ by the Asian Studies Association of Australia found that 'Australia's capacity to understand its' nearest neighbours... is stagnant or declining' compared with a prior study in 1989. This study talks of a marked decline in relevant tertiary studies and hence foreshadows the threat of evaporation of an 'Asia knowledge asset' at a time when it should be growing.

²¹ *Maximising Australia's Asia Knowledge: repositioning and renewal of a national asset*, 2002, Asian Studies Association of Australia.

- The 2002 Review of NALSAS²² concluded that 50 percent of schools include some studies of Asia in their curriculum, a further 25 percent include superficial studies (like pandas and puppets) and 25 percent of schools teach nothing at all about Asia.
- The impact on schools is felt through the minor attention given to Asia-related content in teacher education courses. A Federal Government survey of education faculties conducted by AEF for NALSAS found that where Asia was included in course work, it was for less than 5 percent of allotted time for a subject and was most commonly found in English as a Second Language courses and in relation to multiculturalism.²³
- A 2009 study²⁴ by AEF and the Australian Council of Educational Research, looked at Year 12 student participation in six main subject areas and found that only a very small proportion of senior students studied any content that dealt with Asia. It concluded:
 - While many courses have Asian study options, and a few have a mandatory Asian element, the student take-up is limited, primarily due to the lack of teacher knowledge and confidence.
 - Across Australia, there is generally 'a strong disposition for the inclusion of content on Europe rather than Asia'. Where there is content on Asia, it is mostly an Australian or Western focus such as the Vietnam War; or, in English, the focus on Asia might only include older established texts such as Graham Greene's 'The Quite American' (cited as the most common 'Asia' text on Year 12 Reading Lists).
 - The study highlights the disparity that can occur between the intentions of the written curriculum and actual practice. As an example, NSW Modern History includes many opportunities for content on Asia, but only 2 percent of students chose to study China and less than 4 percent spread across India, Japan and Indonesia in the final examination. Study of Germany accounted for 65 percent and Russia and the Soviet Union, 19 percent.
 - The study noted that where countries from the Asian region are covered, it is a limited range of countries. For example, it appears the opportunity to study India or Pakistan is almost non-existent.

Why has progress been so patchy?

The challenges to increasing the occurrence and impact of the study of Asia are well known and not complex. This is an area that has been evaluated since the 1990s. Typically, evaluations conclude the following.

- The teacher is the key to progress. The majority of teachers have studied little in their own education about Asia and require professional learning and curriculum resources to build their knowledge to teach about Asia.

²² Review of NALSAS, 2003, Erebus Consulting, Commonwealth of Australia

²³ *Scan of Studies of Asia Activities in Pre-Service Primary and Secondary Teacher Education*, 2001, AEF

²⁴ *Studies of Asia in Year 12*, 2009, Wilkinson, J. and Milgate, G, AEF

- Including studies of Asia across the curriculum needs to occur across the whole school - there is little to be gained from Asia focussed activities in isolated classrooms. School leaders need to be equipped to lead whole school curriculum reform.
- There is always competition for a place in the curriculum - particularly for studies perceived to be additional or not a core requirement. Studies of Asia needs to explicit in the curriculum and outcomes monitored. Prior to the Australian Curriculum (due to begin implementation in 2012 in some states) studies of Asia were seen to be an optional extra.
- Pre-service teacher education needs to ensure that graduates are Asia literate. There has been minimal focus or investment in this area by government or institutions.

However the key challenge to be overcome is that funding support for studies of Asia programs has been short-term, stop/start and too little and, until 2008, there was no policy in place to drive it. This has severely limited the scale and momentum of curriculum reform to achieve a critical mass of Asia literate young Australians.

Lessons for success

The impact of recent programs does show success in relatively small-scale initiatives in building Asia literacy and the lessons for success are an excellent platform for further development.

Some findings include:

- *Stimulating demand:* Asia Literacy Ambassadors Project is a highly suitable model for marketing the value of Asia literacy to students and stimulating student demand to continue Asian languages and studies. It also supports local community-business and school engagement and has been used by some companies as an important outreach activity for employees. From a schools' point of view *'it worked by a having a new face with real and recent Asian experience... with a good story to tell'*. However, funding for this project was substantially scaled back in 2012 after an initial two-year Federal government investment and the program will finish in December 2012. An independent evaluation of the program stated that *'70 percent of 5,500 students contacted reported increased interest in Asian languages and cultures and half reported increased enrolment in Asian language study'*.²⁵
- *Teacher capability:* teacher study tours and individual exchanges and scholarships are highly valued by participants and hosts as the means to equip teachers with the personal insight and motivation to further develop their knowledge and capability to construct an Asia literate curriculum for students. Currently, teachers partly or wholly self-fund many of these in-country programs and exchanges, with some jurisdictions providing small incentives, often from NALSSP funds due to end this year. In an evaluation of an AEF study program to China, *'teachers had most to say about what had profoundly changed them. Particular mention was made of increased understanding of*

²⁵ Asia Literacy Ambassadors, Partnering Businesses and Schools, An Evaluation, McRae, D, December 2011

*contemporary and historical aspects of Chinese culture and society, people-to-people relationships, intercultural understanding and the Chinese education system.'*²⁶

- *Innovation and partnerships:* Australia-Asia School BRIDGE is a highly regarded cutting-edge initiative. It is demonstrating the critical role for social media and curriculum innovation in facilitating transformative student-to-student exchanges across cultures and building both student and teacher intercultural capabilities. Participants and partners are highly enthusiastic about pursuing these cross-cultural partnerships and developing the skills for them to be sustainable. *'Wikispaces and Skype have opened up our classrooms in Australia to those in the Asian region,'* say two BRIDGE teachers. The independent evaluation of BRIDGE says, *'This is intercultural learning on a quite dramatic scale...while BRIDGE training is a rich and intensive experience... it does not outweigh the profound impact of the homestay and school experience component of the program.'*²⁷ The AEF has worked to bring a broad range of funding partners to the table to support these initiatives, including government and philanthropic bodies. Australia's Ambassador to Indonesia, HE Greg Moriarty, says, *'The Australia Indonesia BRIDGE project has made a significant contribution to strengthening education and people-to-people links between Australia and Indonesia'*.
- *Strategic planning by education systems:* planning in clusters or at the education regional level, is pointing the way for education systems to design sustainable Asia literacy initiatives and ensure return on the investment. This is a systemic approach that has high potential for deeply embedding an 'Asia mindset' in the daily work of schools and clusters of schools. It is premised on adopting a strategic approach to Asia literacy. Box 2 below is an example of regional planning for Asia literacy.

BOX 2: Education regional planning for Asia literacy²⁸

Regional planning

Leadership of a regional plan ensured:

- objectives had strong links to policy initiatives at national and state levels- educational, cultural and economic objectives
- the knowledge needed to proceed was developed: expert input needed for understanding of (Asian country) society, language and education system
- the model of governance was designed at regional and central levels and with the Asian country
- school teams rather than individuals were involved - and teams linked with each other
- school teams were composed of a principal and two practising teachers to foster and support change at different levels and for longer term sustainability
- networks for shared inputs and reflection were formed in Australia and with partners for reciprocal professional learning.

²⁶ Evaluation of the Eastern Metro Region Study Tour to China, 2011, Interim Report, August 2011

²⁷ Phase 1, Independent Monitoring and Evaluation of 2011-2015 BRIDGE Project

²⁸ Source: Eastern Metropolitan Region, Victoria 2011

Summary: informing the way forward for the cross curriculum study of Asia

The potential for a multifaceted approach to enhance the study of Asia is considerable and should be a main avenue in a new strategy to achieve a critical mass of Asia literacy in Australian schools. The past approaches of NALSSP and NALSAS, where only minor funding was committed to the study of Asia in comparison to Asian languages, have not been adequate to deliver the Asia literacy outcomes being sought. The next stage needs to adopt a different stance.

While the Australian Curriculum will provide guidance on knowledge and perspectives on Asia across all subjects, it is the responsibility of jurisdictions and schools to further develop the curriculum according to their own contexts. To do this efficiently, they will welcome advice and support on curriculum content, resources, access to capacity building, and advice on ways to stimulate interest in a new area of the curriculum.

To meet the objectives for achievement of an Asia literate Australian Curriculum the following will be required.

- An Australian Curriculum implementation strategy for the cross-curriculum priority of Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia that is evidenced based, resourced and consistent with the varying contexts around the country for school decision-making and curriculum design.
- Strengthening the expectations and accountability across schools and systems so that Asia literacy is not just an optional add-on.
- Building leadership support and teacher capability through initial teacher education, continuous professional learning, cross-cultural engagement and access to curriculum resources and school programs. This concerns a mix of incentives for schools and teachers to pursue their own initiatives to expand their capability; and, more structured activities including international exchanges and school partnerships.
- Stimulating engagement through innovative teaching and supporting all communities to benefit from partnerships, exchanges and interactive technologies. The current small scale but highly successful initiatives around Australia need to be further examined for their potential to be scaled-up.
- Expanding an evidence base, expertise and scholarship in this area both in schools, higher education and in professional learning for educators.

6 Asian Languages

Capacity to understand and operate in Asian languages is understood as a crucial skill for the global economy and essential to the attitudinal and behavioural capabilities for an internationalised society. Globally, most students in most developed education systems exit schooling bi-lingual and many tri-lingual. Australia is identified as the third most monolingual developed nation, and altering that mindset, as it manifests in acquiring second and third language capability, is proving to be an intractable policy problem. More of the same policies and programs will not suffice.

Some argue the increased take-up and competency in Asian languages should be the primary focus of Asia literacy. Others agree on the central importance of expanding languages education, but their expectations of building a critical mass of Asia literate young Australians through languages are moderated by their understanding of the significant and complex challenges to be faced to achieve rapid expansion of Asian languages participation.

Major programs and activities

A range of federal and state initiatives have aimed to advance Asian languages learning since 1995.

- *National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools* (NALSAS) with \$210m over two phases spanning 1995-2002.
- The *National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program* (NALSSP) allocated \$62.4m from 2009-12 for schools and jurisdictions to focus on flexible delivery and pathways; teacher supply; and stimulating student demand. The aspirational target set for NALSSP is that by 2020 at least 12 percent of students will exit Year 12 with a fluency in one of the target Asian languages: Chinese, Indonesian, Japanese and Korean.
- State jurisdictions have introduced numerous policies and programs to expand Asian languages including teacher supply strategies such as scholarships, international internships, intensive courses; partnerships with Asian countries such as supply of teaching assistants, curriculum materials and teacher and student visits and exchanges; and, more recently, regional planning for shared services and flexible pathways.

Language participation and outcomes: what is being achieved?

Japanese is the most taught language in Australian schools. Along with Indonesian and Chinese they comprise three of the six most taught languages in Australian schools (the others are Italian, French and German), the outcomes to date are not as positive as intended.²⁹

- University study of languages has seen a 'precipitous decline' – which impacts on teacher availability and the national scholarship and knowledge in Asian languages.
- 18 percent of Australian school students in 2008 study the NALSSP target Asian languages at some stage in their schooling but this is down from 24 percent in 2000. This drops to 5.8 percent of students in Year 12.
- The major decline has been in Japanese (20 percent) and Indonesian, which has been dropping 10,000 students a year for the past five years.
- NALSAS financing of languages was a major stimulus to increased participation (doubled numbers over eight years) but cessation of funding precipitated rapid reduction

²⁹ See

Asia Education Foundation, 2010, *The Current State of Chinese, Indonesian, Japanese and Korean Language Education in Australian Schools*, Education Services Australia, Melbourne;
Wesley, Michael, 2009, *Building an Asia- Literate Australia, An Australian Strategy for Asian Language Proficiency*, Griffith University, Queensland.

in participation, indicating the fragile status of languages education in school programs and need for long term strategies to build teacher supply.

- The drop off from primary to secondary and compulsory to post compulsory years is extremely high.
- Modest growth at Year 12 from 4.8 per cent in 2000 to 5.8 percent in 2008; but while welcome, growth is largely due to the high levels of participation of first language or heritage speakers – 100 percent in Korean and around 90 percent in Chinese.
- On current projections, state and territory jurisdictions will find it exceedingly challenging to meet the COAG target of 12 percent, or doubling the number of Year 12 students fluent in a target Asian language, by 2020. This requires a 100 percent increase. On ABS projections that would be around 24,000 students studying one of the languages, with Korean and Indonesian likely to be the most difficult to grow.

Challenges: is increasing Asian languages learning an intractable policy problem?

There have been at least 67 reports on languages education in Australia over the past two decades. Australian and international research has concluded the key challenges revolve around:

- *teacher quality and shortage* – declining number of qualified teachers and projections on current participation and professional pathways indicate that this will not improve without serious intervention – especially in rural and regional Australia
- *choice of what language to offer in a complex curriculum* - is effected by teacher supply and community demand; timetabling, sequencing and consistency; and competition with other subjects; too little attention has been paid to languages pathways between secondary schools and feeder primary schools
- *the largely optional nature of languages education in most schools* – some states have policies that mandate languages education at some levels of schooling, however this is highly diverse across Australia; commonly, languages are optional from Year 9 and may only have 30 minutes a week allocated to them in primary years
- *student demand* – a vital factor in view of the optional nature of languages education; demand reflects parental and community attitudes and young people's preferences and motivation; and
- *structural incentives and disincentives at Year 12* – a factor in student choice of senior secondary subjects where students are competing for university entry and other further education opportunities.

These are issues that are largely common to all languages and their provision in schools. In addition, the mix of first language and heritage speakers with second language learners in some Asian language classes, like Chinese, can negatively bias second language learners' subject choice.

Plus, further challenges arise from linguistic and cultural differences among Asian languages and their respective cultural histories in Australia that has an impact on aspects such as the teacher profile, pedagogy, resources and student groups.

The AEF's *Four Languages: Four Stories: the Current State of Chinese, Japanese, Indonesian and Korean Language Education in Australian Schools* makes a strong point that we need to move beyond assuming all languages, and all Asian languages, face the same challenges. To make any progress, Australia's Asian languages education now needs to adopt customised strategies to progress individual Asian languages – and we need a vastly improved evidence base to do so.

Box 3 is a snapshot of some of the challenges facing Chinese language education in Australia.

BOX 3: Expanding Chinese language: the challenges³⁰

Challenges

Figures from 2007 show that:

- fewer than 20 per cent of Australians working in China can speak the language
- only 10 per cent have studied even one China-related subject
- at Year 12 nationally, a scant 3 per cent of students take Chinese, more than 90 per cent of whom are of Chinese background
- even in Victoria, where 33 per cent of the country's Chinese learners reside, 94 per cent of those who begin Chinese at school quit before Year 10
- beginners at university drop out at rates close to 75 percent.

Contemporary research indicates that high quality languages teaching requires exposure to the target language and culture; frequent and consistent opportunities for practicing the language; personalised feedback; and sustained personal and instrumental motivation.

Supported by NALSSP and state initiatives, many schools and education jurisdictions are now exploring solutions along these lines for radically redesigning languages learning. This includes innovations in use of new media; flexible delivery arrangements – shared classes and flexible timetables; specialist provision - as in intensives and bi-lingual classes; wide use of language teaching assistants in classrooms alongside teachers; and active links with communities domestically and internationally - especially those using interactive technologies. But it is early days with most of these initiatives having just commenced with funding stimulus from the NALSSP, even though some have been canvassed as options for over a decade.

³⁰ Source: Current State of Chinese Language Learning, Orton, J, University of Melbourne 2008

But, underpinning these innovations, there remain problematic system policy and funding questions such as which priority languages and for what reason; mandated or optional participation and at what levels; number of hours allocated and rules for Year 12 participation. These issues are strongly contested in research and policy design.

Summary: informing the way forward for Asian languages education.

The innovations being trialled under NALSSP and state government language strategies can be the foundation to design a fifteen-year strategy that aims to accelerate Asian languages participation, support radical innovation and significantly improve teacher capability and support. Key features would be the following.

- *Advanced interactive technologies* for teaching and learning: facilitating regular international engagement and enabling flexible and equitable access to languages learning (e.g. a potential NBN education innovation). (Refer to Box 4.)
- *Specialist language and bi-lingual provision*: intensive study locations, school- Higher Education partnerships; international school exchanges designed for those seeking to study languages to a high level of competency.
- *Teacher supply and workforce diversity*: initiatives that address the special nature of teacher shortage in Asian languages and generate options for boosting supply through enhancement of current programs such as Chinese and Japanese teaching assistants and facilitating teaching and support positions for international students.
- *Student demand and motivation*: requiring structural solutions to perceived competitive impediments at the senior levels for second language learners; and consolidation of evidence (e.g. positive impact of Asia Literacy Ambassadors) for deeper understanding of drivers and inhibitors to the take-up of languages more generally.
- *Better use of existing Asian languages capability*: motivation of all students would be enhanced through wider recognition of the value to Australia to be gained from the existing diversity of Asian languages spoken by or available to many young people with Asian heritage in Australian schools.
- *Stable policy environment*: which recognises and promotes the long-term nature of developing an effective languages program in schools, with disincentives for program changes that promote one Asian language over another, or create unsustainable language programs based on fad choices.

BOX 4: Technology, partnerships and language learning³¹

Indonesian in a rural school

'The Bridge project was an ideal opportunity to involve the school with Indonesia. We wanted to go beyond the walls of the school, beyond our area, and indeed beyond Australia.'

Irene Beasley is the sole Indonesian teacher at Leongatha Primary School, located in South Gippsland. The rural school in the heart of Victorian dairy country is partnered with SD Pondok Labu 11, in the bustling ten million-strong metropolis of Jakarta. The two classes connect through Skype, which serves as a rich tool for language learning. 'It enables the children to have authentic, real-time, face-to-face conversation.' *'We try to speak Indonesian our end and they speak English,' she continued.*

Irene reflected on the genuine engagement fostered between her students and their counterparts in Jakarta. *'We've moved from being an isolated school to being part of the wider global community and that's really important for the 21st century.'*

7 New strategic direction: Australia's Asia Literacy Action Plan

This recommendation for Australia's Asia Literacy Action Plan draws on AEF's unique experience in program development, advocacy and support for Asia literacy and on the extensive networks that AEF has built in Australia and with our Asian neighbours. It also draws on the education system expertise of its Advisory Board in designing policies and initiatives for Asia literacy and managing large-scale educational change.

While there is now a positive policy foundation, and pockets of success around the country, a key question to address, before a new approach is canvassed, is why has progress been mixed? There have been achievements but they are uneven nationally and it is essential that an understanding of past successes and shortcomings inform the way forward.

What have we learned?

On the positive side we have learnt that gaining national agreement for the right policy levers including the Melbourne Declaration, the Australian Curriculum and Teacher and School Leader Standards is a major step towards building stakeholder commitment and accelerating Asia literacy.

The limitations of past approaches can be characterised as the following.

- *Fragmented and stop-start funding and policy directives* have impacted on momentum for building the essential foundations for Asia literacy and have not been sustained over the 10-15 years needed for any education reform to take hold.

³¹ Source: Australia Asia School BRIDGE Project, AEF <http://www.asiaeducation.edu.au>

- *Modest funding and no curriculum mandate or targets for cross curriculum studies of Asia* prior to 2009 have meant that the fastest gateway to universal student Asia literacy has been limited to small-scale and short-term initiatives that are not driven by any targets.
- *Minimal national collaboration* on efforts including the development of curriculum resources and professional learning and the sharing of successful strategies and program evaluation.
- *Little investment in collecting local or national data* to monitor Asia literacy student outcomes and ensure accountability
- *Little investment in establishing a local or national evidence base* to inform future planning.
- *Little investment in pre-service teacher education* ensuring a future supply of Asia literate teachers
- *Structural impediments* have inhibited students continuing Asian languages to Year 12 including senior curriculum arrangements, teacher capacity and shortage, the crowded curriculum, and time on task limitations.
- *Strategies have been mostly focussed on the 'supply' side* (e.g. ensuring teaching materials were available, funding additional languages teachers) without the same intensity of funding and focus to better understand what drives student, parental and teacher demand and developing parallel mechanisms to stimulate their interest and commitment.

And, most importantly, major strategies to date have largely been diffused and unconnected across Australia and across schools. There has not been a national, co-ordinated, plan to ensure all jurisdictions work collaboratively to resolve the common challenges they face.

To overcome these constraints, the success of future plans will be dependent on their capacity to:

- strategically sequence support initiatives so that a balance between demand and supply factors is established and sustained. This calls for innovation to read and meet demand and informed analysis of supply needs
- ensure investment is coherent, better targeted and efficient – as in the need to adequately fund improvements in the study of Asia as the most effective pathway to Asia literacy, and to collaborate nationally on professional learning and curriculum resources
- better collect, disseminate and use evidence of successes and failures
- sustain change strategies over the long-term to enable practices to become embedded in school routines and not add-ons or discretionary
- establish a critical pathway for implementation of the Asia priority and Asian languages in the Australian Curriculum; sequence the components of a strategy for change and monitor progress.

Some critical success factors that are apparent from evaluations of AEF initiatives that support the expansion of Asia literacy are the following.

- Informed and involved leadership at the school level – the active engagement of principals is crucial to champion and lead curriculum reform in their schools and ensure investment in achieving it.

- Leadership at a cluster or regional level facilitates planning, sharing and sustainability.
- Teachers ‘hearts and minds’ are invariably engaged when there is a personal, structured and direct experience of Asia.
- Innovative cross-country partnership initiatives that use interactive technologies like the Australia-Asia School BRIDGE are contemporary and highly relevant to students’ on-going involvement. They are also affordable.
- The case for Asia literacy needs to be actively presented to students and parents – such as the Asia Literacy Ambassadors program.

A way forward: Australia’s Asia Literacy Action Plan, 2013-2025

A new strategic direction establishes a compelling vision for Asia literacy as a right for all young Australians. The recommendation is to develop Australia’s Asia Literacy Strategy as a bi-partisan and long-term commitment from 2013 to 2025 to provide every Australian school student with knowledge and skills to prosper in the Asian century.

The outcomes of such a strategy will make a vital contribution to:

- a globally competitive Australian workforce
- a vibrant and outward looking Australian society, and
- an Australian nation with a deep, purposeful connection with Asia.

Key performance indicators would include:

By 2020

- Every principal in every school equipped to ensure their school achieves Asia literacy for all students.
- Every teacher supported to implement the Asia priority in the Australian Curriculum.
- Every graduate teacher to enter the workforce with knowledge of Asia, relevant to their teaching qualification.

By 2025

- Every student to gain foundational and deep knowledge of the countries and cultures of Asia and their engagement with Australia by the time they leave school.
- 50 percent of students from Foundation Year - Year 10 to study an Asian language.

The strategy would address three key problems:

1. *The lack of a coordinated national approach* to equip young Australians with knowledge of Asia and Asian languages has reduced the efficacy of effort and resources in past programs. A national, coordinated and collaborative strategy would provide increased value for money and acceleration of student outcomes.
2. *Low levels of student intercultural skills and knowledge of Asia* threatens Australia’s future opportunities and global competitiveness. Australia’s Asia literacy strategy would ensure that every student would exit schooling with Asia knowledge and skills from 2025 and therefore ensure an Australian community with increased knowledge and understanding of Asia.

3. *Low student participation in Asian languages* endangers Australia's capacity to maximise the opportunities of the Asian Century. Australia's Asia literacy strategy would aspire to fifty percent of students studying an Asian language at some stage of their schooling by 2025.

The strategy would focus on three strategic interventions:

1. *Ensure national coordination and collaboration of strategies* taking into account that jurisdictions and schools have prime responsibility for planning and delivery of the Australian Curriculum. National change strategies would include re-generated forums for Asia-Australia education jurisdiction dialogue; monitoring student participation and outcomes; supporting innovative solutions to intractable problems; building an evidence base; addressing structural impediments; utilising new technologies and developing a national resource bank of curriculum materials and school programs.
2. *Build up the Asia capability of Australia's education workforce* to ensure the goals of the Australian Curriculum and National Standards can be met including equip every school principal to lead an Asia literate school; provide all teachers with access to targeted professional learning programs; provide curriculum resources and an evidence base to support classroom implementation of the Australian Curriculum and ensure all graduate teachers enter the workforce with Asia knowledge and skills.
3. *Increase the value students, parents and the community place on Asia knowledge and Asian languages* including engage all Australian schools with schools in Asia to strengthen people-to people links; support school, business and community partnerships; implement a public education strategy and provide incentives to students to continue Asian languages study.

Australia's Asia literacy Strategy would require significant investment

The NALSAS strategy, in today's monetary terms, invested around \$100 million per year for 8 years and resulted in a doubling of the number of students undertaking Asian languages and 50 percent of schools including some study of Asia.³²

Leveraging the new opportunity provided by the new Australian Curriculum, Australia's Asia literacy strategy would require a minimum of 10 years to ensure the sustainability that NALSAS lacked. A similar level of investment will cost over \$1 billion dollars.

Consider this. That's an investment of around \$33 per student per year over 10 years.

That would seem a small price to pay to equip every young Australian - and Australia - for the opportunities of the Asian Century.

³² Erebus Consulting, 2002, Review of NALSAS, Commonwealth of Australia

ATTACHMENT 1: AEF Advisory Board Members

Name	Representing	Position and Organisation
Prof Field Rickards (CHAIR)	The University of Melbourne	Dean, Melbourne Graduate School of Education
Susan Mann (DEPUTY CHAIR)	Education Services Australia	Chief Executive Officer
Prof Kent Anderson	Asian Studies Association of Australia	Vice-President
Michele Cody	Australian Primary Principals Association	Member, National Executive
Prof Bob Conway	Australian Council of Deans of Education	Dean of Education, Flinders University
Ian Dalton	Australian Parents Council	Executive Director
Peter Garrigan	Australian Council of State School Organisations	President
Cheryl Best	Department of Education & Training, NSW	General Manager, Learning and Development
Valerie Gould	Independent Schools Council of Australia	Executive Director, Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia
Tony Mackay	ACARA AITSL	Deputy Chair Chair
Jenny McGregor	Asialink	Chief Executive Officer
Alex Gordon	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations	Branch Manager, National Curriculum Branch
Helen O'Brien	National Catholic Education Commission	Assistant Director, Catholic Education Office, SA
Susan Gazis	Australian Professional Teaching Associations	President
Sheree Vertigan	Australian Secondary Principals Association	President
Chris Wardlaw	Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Vic	Deputy Secretary, Office of Policy, Research and Innovation
Juanita Healy	Department of Education, WA	A/Executive Director, Statewide Services
Prof Fazal Rizvi	The University of Melbourne	Professor in Global Studies in Education, Melbourne Graduate School of Research
John Firth	Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Certification Authorities	Chairman, ACACA, CEO, Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority

Attachment 2: International Comparisons

European Union

- “The EU’s guiding principle is that every person should be able to speak two foreign languages in addition to their mother tongue.”³³
- Asia-Europe Classroom, an Asia-Europe Foundation initiative, has connected 1,100 members from 846 schools across 43 countries, through a “cyber classroom”.
<http://www.aec.asef.org/>

Sweden

- In 2011 Swedish Education Minister announced that Chinese should be taught in all Swedish schools within the decade, making it the first European country to do so.³⁴

France

- 352 schools offering Chinese in 2008 and 20,628 students learning the language, making it the fifth most popular language in France.³⁵

Spain

- The Spanish Government’s *Casa Asia* has established the School of Bamboo, which supports Asian studies in Spanish schools.

United Kingdom

- Modern Foreign Languages are a core element of the National Curriculum. Only four non-European languages can be taught: Japanese, Mandarin, Urdu and Arabic.³⁶
- One in seven UK schools now teaching Mandarin, with nation-wide increases seen in students completing A-level Chinese, rising from 2372 in 2010 to 3237 in 2011.³⁷
- British Council connects 43,000 students and teachers in UK and China through Global School Partnerships. 3,900 school partnerships established between schools in the UK and Asia, Africa and Latin America.³⁸

United States

- Secretary for Education, Arne Duncan, has expressed an urgency for ‘citizens of the United States to become fluent in other languages ... This commitment goes beyond the European languages traditionally taught ... it extends to languages that are essential for our economic and strategic interests – languages such as Arabic and Mandarin Chinese, Urdu and Farsi, Pashto and Dari.’³⁹

³³ http://ec.europa.eu/languages/languages-of-europe/languages-2010-and-beyond_en.htm

³⁴ <http://www.thelocal.se/34768/20110706/>

³⁵ Don Starr, ‘Chinese Language Education in Europe: the Confucius Institutes’, in *European Journal of Education* 44, No. 1, 2009, pp. 75-6

³⁶ Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, ‘Modern Foreign Languages: Programme for study for key stage 3 and attainment targets’ extract from *The National Curriculum 2007*, p. 166. www.qca.org.au/curriculum (accessed 22 January, 2012)

³⁷ http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/education/8439959.stm

³⁸ <http://www.britishcouncil.org/new/press-office/press-releases/call-for-young-linguists-to-enter-chinese-speaking-x-factor/>

³⁹ <http://www.ed.gov/news/speeches/education-and-language-gap-secretary-arne-duncans-remarks-foreign-language-summit>

- Asia Society have been active in incorporating an International Education focus in the US Common Core Standards designed to provide consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn.⁴⁰
- *Connect All Schools* Initiative aims to link every school in the United States to the world by 2016. So far, 302 classes from 263 schools have been connected to 125 countries.
www.connectallschools.org
- 4%, or 59,860 US students, learning a foreign language were learning Chinese in 2008, with 779 Chinese language programs running in elementary and secondary schools.⁴¹

China

- Chinese Government sends 5,000 teachers abroad to over 300 Confucius Institutes each year to gain international experience, with more than 230,000 people enrolling in the program so far.⁴²
- Chinese Government has a policy to send all high school principals on international experience programs in the next five years to develop their international mindset and learn from others.

Taiwan

- Committed to a 'Global Vision' as one of the pillars of their education policy, underpinned by two core visions to provide a quality learning environment, cultivate good citizens and boost international competitiveness.⁴³

New Zealand

- The NZ Ministry of Education works to 'ensure New Zealand education has a strong international dimension and links.'
- The International Education Agenda 2007-2012 is significantly focused on the Asia-Pacific region promoting the embedding of Asia into the NZ curriculum, development of resources and to increase teacher, principal and School Board awareness of Asia.⁴⁴

Links

Asia Society: <http://asiasociety.org/>

Asia NZ Foundation: <http://asianz.org.nz/>

Asia-Europe Foundation: <http://asef.org/>

Casa Asia: <http://casaasia.eu>

British Council: <http://www.britishcouncil.org/new/>

Partnership for 21st Century Skills: <http://www.p21.org/>

⁴⁰ <http://sites.asiasociety.org/pgl2012/2011/11/15/the-common-core-and-global-competence/>

⁴¹ Vivien Stewart & Chris Livaccari, *Meeting the Challenge: Preparing Chinese Language Teachers for American Schools*, New York: Asia Society, 2010, pp. 10-11

⁴² <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/china/8776515/The-rise-and-rise-of-Mandarin-but-how-many-will-end-up-speaking-it.html>

⁴³ Wu Ching-Ji, *Education in Taiwan 2011-2012*, Taipei: Ministry of Education, Government of Taiwan, 2011, p. 45

⁴⁴ International Education Division, *The International Education Agenda: A Strategy for 2007-2012*, Wellington: New Zealand Government. 2007